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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2904  
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RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 0038  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0106  
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 0018  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0093

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 000468

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/NCE MARC NORDBERG

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [HU](#)

SUBJECT: HUNGARIAN COMMENTS ON BURMA'S UPCOMING REFERENDUM

REF: SECSTATE 45471

Classified By: DCM Jeffrey Levine, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) PolOff discussed reftel with the MFA Asia/Pacific Department Head Gyula Petho on May 6. Petho acknowledged and expressed agreement with reftel's concerns about referendum's legitimacy, drawing reference to both the EU and UNSC statements on the issue. He believes the referendum will proceed despite the human loss and damage caused by the recent cyclone, commenting that voting has already occurred at Burmese Embassies and military bases. Petho noted that the Burmese Government appears to be holding back the military from large scale support to cyclone victims - in Petho's view a mistake because such assistance would have been a positive message to citizens. He stated that the Burmese Government most likely sees the recent cyclone as a "God-send," shifting focus to the humanitarian assistance coming from the International Community. (Note: Petho stated that the Hungarian Government may be able to provide some financial assistance through two primary international NGOs - Hungarian Baptist Aid and the Hungarian Interchurch Aid. The Debrecen medical team that responded to the 2005 tsunami has also contacted the MFA offering their assistance. End note.)

¶2. (C) Petho also shared his views on the mid-April trip with MFA State Secretary Laszlo Varkonyi to Malaysia and Thailand where they met with senior-level host country officials. In both countries, hosts expressed the view that the May 10 referendum is a "positive" step, but the scheduled Burmese elections in 2010 are more important. Petho noted, in particular with Thailand, that relative calm in Burma was very important for trade and security reasons. Continuing, he stated that interlocutors in both countries shared a common view - also held by the majority of ASEAN members - that the key players on the Burma question are India and China. Both the Thai and Malay officials stated that India will be very cautious with Burmese sanctions, in particular as to their impact on security and trade issues. They stated that China would fill any vacuum created by a reduced Indian presence in Burma.  
Foley